ADJUSTMENT TO MILITARY LIFE

AUGUST B. HOLLINGSHEAD

ABSTRACT

Cultural and institutional factors impinge on the personality to bring about both adjustment and maladjustment to the military situation. The adjustment process in relation to the military situation has three phases: the premilitary, the military, and the postmilitary. Some of the social and cultural conditions which aid, as well as hinder, the adjustment process in each of its phases are discussed.

Adjustment to the military situation,[1] viewed as a social process in the life of the person, has three principal phases and several subphases. The three main phases may be delimited as the premilitary, the military, and the postmilitary. The premilitary is nascent in the life of every boy in our culture and takes the form of preconditioning for possible participation in a potential war. If war comes, millions of young men become subject to the military phase. Its principal subphases include induction into the army, basic training, specialized training, technical training, precombat maneuvers, combat, and, finally, the postcombat period, and demobilization. The final, or postmilitary, phase is indeterminate in length and character. Its one criterion is that the person who has survived the first two phases is accorded the legal and social status of "veteran."

I

Adjustment to the military situation begins in early childhood, when preconditioning factors, both direct and indirect, inherent in war and in the personality-forming process establish a frame of reference for the person's reactions to a war.

The war complex in American culture is composed of several antithetical patterns. On the one hand, knowledge about certain aspects is universal. These include the myths, legends, traditions, and sentiments about wars the American people have fought. On the other, explicit knowledge about military life is limited to the comparatively small proportion of the population who have actually served in the army, navy, marine corps, or coast guard. Popularly this latter type of knowledge is concerned with things "military," in contrast to "war" as a national experience. These two aspects of the war complex have been separated in our culture to such an extent that "war" is glorified as a quasi-holy endeavor in the life of the nation, while things "military" are abhorred.

This antithesis in the complex may be brought to a focus by sketching briefly the myth of the invincibility of the citizen-soldier in war. This myth may have grown out of the fact that in Colonial times the settler was a householder, farmer, carpenter, blacksmith, doctor, teacher, or soldier, as the occasion demanded. In the tests of arms with the Indians the settler came off best on most occasions. This gave him confidence, self-reliance, and a sublime faith in his ability to take up arms when necessary and defeat the common foe. The experiences of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and World War I did not change to any appreciable degree the American's faith in his ability to seize arms in a national crisis and go forth to vanquish the enemy, whoever or wheresoever he might be. The tradition of the citizen-soldier and his success at arms has been handed down from generation to generation, and experience has reinforced it in almost every generation by a new war and a new success.

[1] The "military situation" is considered to be a particular type of social situation. It is here used in the sense recently delimited by Mapheus Smith, "Social Situation, Social Behavior, Social Group," *Psychological Review*, LII (July, 1945), 224–29.

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

Belief in the power of the citizen-soldier, coupled with the personification of the struggle in the name of the leader and the derogation of the military as an institution —all this has created an effective barrier against the transference of systematic knowledge about the military institution to the society as a whole. Thus, in our culture the emphasis has been on an emergency army. This army should be raised only after hostilities have started. After it has achieved its victory, it should be demobilized, as rapidly as possible. This has resulted in the maintenance of a very small professional standing army and navy. Furthermore, our disapproval of war and things military prevents our teaching the young anything about military institutions per se. The war aspect of our culture is thus organized in such a way that there is incongruity between its symbolic and traditional aspects and its effective aspects as embodied in the structure and function of the armed services.

The traditions, legends, and symbols of the war complex conditions the child to accept war as an inevitable process in the life of the nation; and if a war crisis develops, the person is preconditioned to act in his role as a citizen-soldier. However, this preconditioning does not prepare him for the role he will play. Consequently, when war comes, the potential soldier is preconditioned in an ambivalent manner. On the one hand, he has been taught to revere the hero who gained his immortal fame in the glory that is synonymous with war. On the other, he has learned to fear the institution that trained the hero in the ways of killing. Reverence for bravery and glory are linked with fear and distrust of military institutions.

The net effect of this conditioning was an awareness on the part of the male adolescent and the young adult in 1940 that he might be called upon to contribute his life to the maintenance of the American culture just as his ancestors had. How each person reacted subjectively when he became aware of the grim possibility of wounds or death in battle is not known, but it might well become the subject of research. Long before this point was ever reached in the development of the person, the war complex in our culture had conditioned him either to meet the test when it came, along with his fellows, or to seek some escape.

II

The adjustment of the civilian to the active phase of the military situation is preconditioned by his conceptions of war and the military service, as well as by the intrapsychic structure of his personality. Normally, a series of personal adjustments occur in the life of the person before he enters the service. A sense of "going away" from a familiar way of life to a strange one usually takes possession of the potential soldier as the time approaches for his departure from his home, family, friends, and community. He may look forward eagerly to the new adventure, or he may dread it; but at some time a sense of foreboding and the sentiments associated with war and the army seize his consciousness. This may be only a fleeting daydream, or it may persist and pervade his every activity. A counterconditioning factor is the self-image of a heroic soldier who has committed a valorous deed. In this role the self is projecting itself into the culturally defined role of the citizen-soldier in war.[2]

In the induction center the inductee is transformed quickly from a civilian into a recruit. This phase of the process is difficult to describe, because so much happens to the person in such a short time that his reactions tend to be confused and he does not comprehend the changed circumstances and events. Briefly, the man is sworn into the service, issued a serial number, which is more important to the War Department

[2] In talking with army air forces personnel in all phases of the military situation from basic training through the postcombat period, the writer has been convinced that these psychic states are present in all men to a greater or lesser degree when they enter the service. The foregoing idea was based on informal discussion. The information came from soldiers adjusted to the military situation.

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

than his name, since two or more soldiers may have the same name. Thus, the change from a name to a name and a number is one step in the militarization of the person. The civilian clothes are disposed of when the uniform and toilet articles are issued. The new soldier is assigned to a unit, that is, a formal group designated by a letter or a number. This unit is a segment of a still larger unit. He is assigned to a barracks or a tent with the rest of his unit. Within the tent or barracks he is assigned to a bed. He is issued everything he needs in this phase of his training according to a definite schedule of allowances, and he signs for all items that are nonexpendable and has the expendable issue items checked against him.

During the few days the recruit remains at the induction center he becomes aware of the rudiments of military life by actual participation. The use of his time is scheduled for him by the staff of the induction center. The first thing he must learn is that there is a time for everything. When this time is, and how much is allowed, is determined by the institution and not by the recruit. The second thing he must learn is that how this time is to be used is defined by the institution, except the rare "free time." Third, the institution defines how the task allotted to a given time is to be accomplished. Fourth, the recruit learns that he does everything in formation, that is, with his group. In short, the recruit is no longer an individual with the right of personal choices, alternatives, and decisions. Instead, he is, in informal army usage, "a body." This "body" must be trained to react without question or hesitation to institutional stimuli. The loss of choice and initiative develops in him a sense of dependency on the institution for decisions. This principle is summarized in the rule that a soldier does his duty. What is meant is that the good soldier follows directions laid down for him in the institutional situation.

Each arm of the military service has developed an exact behavior system into which the recruit is not only expected to fit as a part into a machine but is made to fit into the specific part of the behavior system as it is defined for him by the institutional situation.[3] The adjustment process, from the viewpoint of the person, consists in reorienting his behavior from the civilian frame of reference to the military standard. From the viewpoint of the military situation, the adjustment process is viewed as a training problem. The institutional functionaries work on the assumption that any normal man or woman has the ability to learn the routine behavior patterns associated with every phase of the military process. Thus, the recruit, from the first day of his military life to its culmination in battle, is continually learning the routines connected with some phase of military activity.

The military service has reduced every phase of the training process to its simplest elements and then standardized them. The assumption is that every phase of a given military action must be explained so carefully, simply, and clearly that the soldier will be able to grasp the principles involved, learn the routine rapidly, and then act in concert with others in its application. This principle applies to every action—at least in the army air forces—from saluting to ditching procedures in very heavy bombers. If the slowest learner cannot keep up with the group in the training process, he is soon eliminated as being inapt, incapable, or maladjusted.

The perfectly trained soldier is one who has had his civilian initiative reduced to zero. In the process the self becomes identified with the institution and dependent upon it for direction and stimulation. The ideally adjusted soldier would be a military dependent who looked to the institution for all his personal, social, and emotional satisfactions. Unlike the dependent child, who normally matures and strives to break the bonds of dependency that tie him to his

[3] For an exposition of the concept "behavior system" see August B. Hollingshead, "Behavior Systems as a Field for Research," *American Sociological Review*, IV (December, 1939), 816–26.

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

parents, the adjusted soldier is encouraged to be a dependent of the institution. In psychiatric terms, the military institution becomes a substitute parent for an adult who has been reduced to infancy by the training it has given him. Moreover, the aim of the institution is to keep him in this infantile state by the use of psychological and institutional devices. Thus, every effort is made by the institution to organize the soldier's life both overtly and covertly.

From the viewpoint of the institution, the ideal soldier would be one who had so identified himself with the military situation that all his personal, psychic, and emotional needs would be satisfied by instrumentalities provided by the institution. In this ideal case the soldier could devote all his energies, interests, and his inner self to the demands and expectancies of the institution. The distractions of civilian life would not then disturb the soldier. He would not worry about his parents, his wife, girl friend, his future after the army, his lost dignity, his possible death. In short, the military situation is designed to produce soldiers—men conditioned to institutional requirements, defined situations, and explicit expectancies who will neither think for themselves nor make demands on the institution for needs that are not identified with institutional ends.

Unfortunately, from the viewpoint of the institution, the recruit comes to it with a well-developed personality, a civilian frame of reference, and a set of cultural values and expectancies that are not compatible with its objectives or organization. For these reasons the recruit must be remade; as any old sergeant knows, "a recruit is not worth a damn until he has been broken." This means the re-education of the person to military ways and values. In this process the initiative of the civilian must be inhibited, if not destroyed. The recruit must learn that the institution makes his decisions for him; that he is dependent upon it for all needs relevant to its objectives; that he has few, if any, responsibilities to the civilian world. Henceforth his responsibility is to the service, his unit, his "buddy," and himself, in descending order. The recruit must also be made to realize—firmly, definitely, and always—that he is only a small part of the unit, and the unit of the army, and the army of "the service." The soldier is expendable, as is the unit and army, but not this mystical symbol, the service. The service symbol is not to be identified with the nation, but it is in the nation's service. It is the *sine qua non* of the nation's existence.

The recruit's experience in life usually has been limited to his family, church, school, job, and community. When he enters the military service, he is generally unaware that the world he has known will be set apart from his new area of experience as being "civilian," whereas he is "military," in contrast to those others who are civilians. The acquirement of the military status comes suddenly, but its meaning does not grow clear for some time. When the significance of the phrase "You're in the army now, soldier" impinges on the recruit's consciousness for the first time, the active adjustment process between the self and the reality of the military situation has reached a critical point, for now, probably for the first time, the recruit realizes that his old civilian life is behind him. He has burned his bridges, or has had them burned for him by society. He is in the service, and he can't go back to civilian life, since he is no longer a civilian but is a man who has a special legal status and is subject to a special kind of law, military law, which he probably never knew existed until the punitive sections of the Articles of War were read and explained to him shortly after he was sworn into the service. When this point is reached, the self will begin to appraise itself in its relation to the new situation, and to adjust to, or start to figure out ways to evade, the situation. He will eventually adjust as a normal soldier or develop into a psychoneurotic. This proposition is posited on the assumption that the recruit does not comprehend the significance the objective military situation has for him until it has subjective meaning to him. When this hap-

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

pens, the self suddenly realizes it must adjust to the situation or escape, and escape at first seems impossible. At this point his pre-existing personality traits will begin to influence actively the new social life.[4] From this point on until the end of his military career the recruit tends either to adjust to the military situation as a normal soldier or to seek escape through the use of the psychological and social devices he learns as he becomes better oriented to the life around him.

From studies made during and subsequent to World War I of soldiers' reactions to the conditions imposed in the military situation, investigators concluded there are two classes of personality, in so far as adjustment to the requirements of military service are concerned: the normal, who will in all probability adjust successfully, and the pretraumatic, who in most cases will be unable to adjust.[5] Men in the latter category develop war neuroses—referred to in the popular press of World War I as "shell shock" but now known as "psychoneurosis."

Investigations of the reactions to the stresses imposed upon these men, as well as to those who did not develop a neurosis, gave rise to the observation that, although all men in a given military situation were subject to the same external conditions, they did not react in a similar manner. A small percentage reacted in an abnormal way, thereby revealing their maladjustment. The question then arose as to why some men failed to adjust to a situation that appeared normal in its military context to most of the men subjected to it.

By studying the special types of reactions exhibited by soldiers in a given situation, investigators observed that the well-adjusted soldier acted in the manner expected of him as defined by the situation but that the maladjusted one acted in a deviant manner, for some, then unaccountable, reason. Investigators believed that the reasons for this erratic behavior existed in the personality of the maladjusted soldier. This led to an interest in the study of life-histories as a key to unlock the mystery. It was soon apparent that precipitating factors in the development of the neurosis were inherent in the military situation, but before they would be elicited they had to be combined with predisposing conditions. The study of life-histories revealed significant differences between the premilitary experiences of the normal and those of the neurotic soldier. In short, the neurotic soldier carried into the military service the predisposing conditions which might be stimulated by precipitating factors. The probable result would be a neurotic soldier of no value to his unit or the service. A second conclusion, reached from the study of life-histories, was that the predisposing conditions had developed in the personality of the potentially neurotic soldier during his childhood and youth.

On the basis of the experience and knowledge gained in World War I with maladjusted soldiers the decision was made by the director of Selective Service, when this system was established by Congress in 1940, to eliminate, in so far as possible, the pretraumatic personality from the armed services. With this end in view, a screening test was devised on the basis of the best psychological and psychiatric experience available that would separate the normal from the pretraumatic personality. On the basis of this test the pretraumatics were to be rejected for military service and placed in Class IV-F, and the normals were to be inducted. This was the policy followed previous to the outbreak of war.

Subsequent to Pearl Harbor the policy was changed, with a consequent lowering of the requirements for induction. This change in policy altered the plans of the Selective Service System to reject all types of pretraumatic personalities. The demands

[4] For a psychiatric interpretation of this point see Nathan W. Ackerman, "Psychiatric Disorders in Servicemen and Veterans," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, XV (April, 1945), 352–60.

[5] Sádor Lorand, "Psychoanalytic Investigation of Reaction to the War Crisis of Candidates for Induction," *Psychoanalytic Review*, XXII (January, 1945), 25–32.

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

for manpower by the armed services were too urgent to tolerate the rejection rate of more than 50 per cent that prevailed before hostilities began. By lowering the requirements for induction on the psychiatric screening examination thousands of men with pretraumatic personality traits were inducted. The picture as a whole shows that, of between 13,000,000 and 14,000,000 physical examinations given under the Selective Service System to February, 1944, there were over 4,000,000 rejections for all causes before men entered service and more than 500,000 discharges. More than one-third of the rejections and more than 40 per cent of the discharges were on neuropsychiatric grounds.[6]

From these figures it is clear that some 30 per cent of the potential soldiers who were called before Selective Service boards for examination or examined in induction centers were unfit for service. However, most of these men probably went to the examination believing they would be soldiers in a short time. These four million might be studied with respect to how they readjusted to their release from the prospect of possible military service.

That the pretraumatic personality types among them were making psychic adjustments subsequent to Pearl Harbor and before they were called for induction is revealed by a study made by National Headquarters, Selective Service System, in late 1943 and early 1944 to determine the incidence of selected psychosomatic disorders among registrants as of November and December, 1943; a sample of 70,000 white and Negro registrants was used. The diseases selected were: asthma, peptic ulcer, history of peptic ulcer, gastro-intestinal syndromes, neurocirculatory asthenia, and functional disorders of expressive movements. The incidence of the defects selected, as of November and December, 1943, were then compared with the incidence of the same diseases in registrants examined for induction previous to Pearl Harbor. It was found that incidence and rejection rates for asthma nearly doubled for both total incidence and rejection rates, with an increase of two and one-half times the peacetime rate for Negroes; history of peptic ulcer increased more than three times the peacetime rate, particularly among the whites; gastro-intestinal syndromes also increased two and one-half times the peacetime rate; neurocirculatory asthenia more than doubled for the whites and increased five times for the Negroes.[7]

There are abundant evidences in the studies made under the direction of Colonel Rowntree that psychosomatic diseases showed a marked increase under the stress of war. This was particularly true of the Negro, who in peacetime was relatively immune from psychosomatic disorders. These data are cited to indicate that maladjustments develop in the potential soldier during what may be called an "active subphase" of the premilitary phase of the military situation. Obviously, the preconditioning these men had received, as measured against the reality of the war, had something to do with the development of psychosomatic disorders even before they were examined for induction.[8]

[6] Leonard G. Rowntree, "Psychosomatic Disorders as Revealed by Thirteen Million Examinations of Selective Service Registrants," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, VII (January, 1945), 27–30. The interested reader will find detailed statistics in this article bearing on this question.

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Grabill's recent study on the effect of the war on the birth rate reveals another type of adjustment many young men were making subsequent to 1939. Grabill showed that the birth rates per 1,000 women, fifteen to forty-four years old, for the United States, began to experience a series of remarkable increases in early 1940, which continued through 1943. These increases, when charted, showed that the first large peak came "10 months after the Selective Service bill was introduced into Congress. The second peak occurred 10 months after the passing of the Selective Service Act. . . . .

"The birth rate reached another plateau at the beginning of 1942, or 10 months after the passing of the Lend-Lease Act. The center of the plateau corresponds to a period 10 months after Germany declared war on Russia. The plateau ends in May, 1942, 10 months after the Atlantic Charter was

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

Students of maladjustments in the military service generally agree that personality distortions which have persisted from childhood predispose soldiers to fail to adjust to the military life.[9] Chief among them are: "somatic complaints, poor application at school, poor family and social background, and unsatisfactory employment records."[10] It has been found that the pretraumatic personality may adjust fairly well in civilian life, where his neurotic symptoms are accepted as a part of his personality and where his weaknesses are protected by compensations in himself and his family and associates. They may even be catered to by others as a technique of adjustment in the interpersonal relations of a stable situation. However, when the pretraumatic personality is suddenly taken from this social environment and placed in a wholly strange and generally feared situation, where he does not know what is expected or required, anxieties come to the fore. They tend to be integrated into a defense of the self (ego) against the military situation rather than a defense against unconscious anxieties experienced in the civilian situation. In the military situation the self is placed in danger, in the view of the neurotic soldier; and the drive for self-protection creates a covert struggle within the personality against the threatening situation (the army, war, battles, death).

III[11]

The men and women who have served in the military services have changed in many ways. They have grown older; most of them have traveled widely, seen new lands and peoples, and gained a new viewpoint on life and the world. They have learned new ways of doing things and frequently have forgotten much that was once familiar and routine. Most have become adjusted to military life. The transition from military

signed. . . . . A huge peak is shown for the birth rate in October, 1942, 10 months after Pearl Harbor. Another large peak is shown toward the end of 1943, or 10–11 months after a series of Allied victories . . . . and after the minimum draft age was lowered from twenty to eighteen years" (Wilson H. Grabill, "Effect of the War on the Birth Rate and Postwar Fertility Prospects," *American Journal of Sociology*, L [September, 1944], 107–11).

A second significant fact recorded by Grabill is that the births which made these ascending plateaus and peaks came from women who were bearing their first or second child.

The 10 months' lag between a war crisis and a spate of births is believed to be the result of the familial adjustments that many young men and women made to their lives as a result of the war. The policy of deferring married men from induction previous to Pearl Harbor induced many young men to marry. This action was a possible escape from military service. Then, as the war deepened, the policy of deferring men with children stimulated parenthood. This was followed by deferments for a time of pre-Pearl Harbor fathers. Although this inference from the data presented by Grabill may be unwarranted, again it may be sound in the light of what is known about the way different individuals reacted to the possibility of military service. These birth figures may be a manifestation of an attempt on the part of many young men to escape military obligations.

[9] Nathan W. Ackerman, "Psychiatric Disorders in Servicemen and Veterans," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, XV (April, 1945), 352–60; Leslie H. Farber and Leonard Micon, "Gastric Neurosis in a Military Service," *Psychiatry*, VIII (August, 1945), 343–61; Manfred S. Guttmacher and Frank A. Stewart, "Psychiatric Study of Absence without Leave," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CII (July, 1945), 74–81; "Eighth Service Command Post-graduate Medical Education Neuro-psychiatric Case Report, Case No. 12—July, 1944," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, VII (September, 1945), 310–12; Lewis H. Loesser, "The Sexual Psychopath in the Military Service," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CII (July, 1945), 92–101; Leon J. Saul, "Psychological Factors in Combat Fatigue," *Psychosomatic Medicine*, VII (September, 1945), 253–73; Alexander, J. N. Schneider, and Cyrus W. LaGrone, Jr., "Delinquents in the Army, a Statistical Study of 500 Rehabilitation Center Prisoners," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, CII (July, 1945), 82–91.

[10] Lorand, *op. cit.*

[11] This phase of the military situation has received some attention from sociologists. See Willard Waller, *The Veteran Comes Home* (New York: Dryden Press, 1944); Eli Ginsberg, "The Occupational Adjustment of 1,000 Selectees," *American Sociological Review*, VIII (June, 1943), 256–63; Wilbur B. Brookover, "The Adjustment of Veterans to Civilian Life," *American Sociological Review*, X (October, 1945), 579–86.

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

to civilian ways will be difficult for many, particularly in a rapidly changing economic structure, where each will be dependent on a job and the earnings from that job to maintain himself and his family. In the military situation his physical needs and many of his personal desires were cared for by the government because the person was "in service." The status assured him shelter, food, clothes, transportation, entertainment, and free medical, legal, and religious advice, as well as the regularity of payday! The person in service did not need to do anything but serve to have these things assured to him. To be sure, he did what was required of him when necessary, but in many instances all that was necessary to achieve honorable service was to be present. If the man was married, he had an allotment that was regularly sent to his wife, once the authorization reached the proper office. The man's insurance, laundry, and haircuts were paid for out of his pay. He did not have to worry about income taxes unless he had a private business, since the fifteen-hundred-dollar military exemption covered all but the higher ranking officers. Legal-aid or personal-affairs officers helped those who needed legal or personal advice, without obligation or fee.

With the transition from a military to a civilian life this institutional protection will be withdrawn in large part. Certain protective aspects of the military situation will be maintained through the mechanism of veterans' benefits, but these are only a small portion of the safeguards around the person in the military situation.

Some proportion of the men and women in service have gained definite skills of value in civilian life. These persons will have little trouble, in all probability, in capitalizing on them in civilian employment. However, the preponderant majority have been in the services for years. During this time all their training and efforts have been directed to the perfection of skills, techniques, and activities focused on battle. What must not be forgotten is that an army, navy, or air force exists for one purpose—namely, battle. This is its one justification. The men and women who give this machinery substance are trained to achieve the end for which it was created. Since there are few places in peacetime society for most of the skills and techniques these men have learned, they must recognize that they are bringing back to civilian life nothing that has economic value. Those who wish to argue that any experience has value may maintain their point, but industry is not going to pay for the rich personal pride a veteran carries because he helped storm the beaches on D-Day or for the skill a turret gunner on a multi-engined bomber gained in combat with the *Luftwaffe* four miles up in the sky over Europe. What these men will bring back are rich memories—personality assets in all probability—but of little value in making a living in our society. Persons in this category may find the readjustment to civilian life difficult because the skill they learned in the army has no civilian counterpart, and a large number of these combat troops had no vocational skills before entering the army, since they were taken directly from school into the military service. Most of these men have become adjusted to the military way of life; they have come to the point where they took personal pride in their accomplishments; they are masters in the craft of warfare. The gulf of experience between themselves and the noncombat soldier is unbridgeable. It will be impossible for them to communicate their inner sense of accomplishment in the fine art of killing to civilians.

The adjustment from military to civilian life may be more difficult than the adjustment to the military situation was in the first instance for millions of men. In the active military service the recruit was in a new situation, and almost all his fellows were likewise adjusting to a new and strange set of expectancies and requirements. Interpersonal relations (intercommunication) were possible. Definite social and psychological adjustment techniques were learned in the group and resorted to by almost all the members, which enabled them to emo-

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).

tionally, psychologically, and socially adjust the self to the new social milieu.[12] Although the adjustment process was personal on the part of the individual soldier, he was aided in it by his comrades. Thus, in many ways it was a group process. Then, too, the readjustments from civilian life to military life were specific and definite. The military situation defined for the soldier each obligation, duty, and technique necessary to accomplish the obligation and duty in a minute way. All the soldier had to learn was how the particular action was supposed to be performed, then adjust to it. No initiative was required on his part—in fact, in training situations it was repressed.

The civilian must forage for himself. He must provide his own shelter, food, clothing, entertainment, health, and other services which were furnished by the military institution. The recognition of this fact and the readjustment to its implications may be the crucial element in the readjustment process. In civilian life the person is responsible for his own maintenance and behavior. In the military service he is responsible only for his behavior in relation to the requirements of the situation.

Many veterans will be faced with the problem of developing a sense of social responsibility, for social responsibility is definitely negated, if not destroyed, in the military situation. The only responsibility is personal—for personal security, property you have signed for, for health and sanitation. Responsibility to the unit and the service, as symbolized by the uniform, is constantly emphasized; but the soldier's responsibility to society, to property, and to civilian institutions is ignored. His responsibility to his country and his comrades in arms is symbolized by his service. This concept of service is cultivated and glorified by the military leadership. It becomes in psychiatric terms a superego, a group substitute for the self (ego) of the person who is contributing his most precious possession, his being, to the service of his country. By the creation of this superego—military service—the person's sense of social responsibility is largely neutralized. The military man forgets he is a citizen as he becomes a soldier. In this process of substitution of a "service self" for a "personal self," certain aggressive attitudes for civilians develop which will have to be sublimated as the soldier readjusts from military to civilian life. However, there will be a strong tendency for the superego construct of service to remain. It is believed it is manifested in the notion often encountered in the veteran that society owes him something more tangible than he is receiving for his "sacrifice"; by this he means his military service. The very existence of this attitude acts as a barrier to the veteran's acceptance of his just obligation as a citizen.

This superego ideal of service is fostered as a trait in the war complex. It has been given official recognition in the differential treatment accorded veterans by Congress and state legislatures since the creation of this nation. It has variously taken the form of land grants, pensions, bonuses, exemption from taxes, and special legal status. The latest manifestation is the so-called "G.I. Bill of Rights." Every veterans' organization aggressively pursues the policy of gaining for the veteran his just "rights."

This paper has concerned itself with a few exploratory observations on each of the three phases of adjustment to the military situation. The writer believes this subject might well be made the subject of extensive and thorough research by sociologists interested in personality development, behavioral adjustment problems, and the sociology of war.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

[12] See Irving L. Janis, "Psychodynamic Aspects of Adjustment to Army Life," *Psychiatry*, VIII (May, 1945), 159–76, for a discussion of some of the psychological techniques used by soldiers in adjusting to military life.

This content downloaded from 128.135.012.127 on December 08, 2016 19:43:30 PM
All use subject to University of Chicago Press Terms and Conditions (http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/t-and-c).